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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 2 October 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SY (Senegal)
(Vice-President)

later: Mr. de MARCO (Malta)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations [125] (continued)

- Address by Lieutenant-General Omer Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, President of the National Salvation Revolution Command Council of the Republic of the Sudan

- Address by Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the People's Republic of Bulgaria

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Al-Shara' (Syrian Arab Republic)
Mr. Borg Olivier (Malta)
Prince Saud Al-Faisal (Saudi Arabia)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Sy (Senegal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 125 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/45/515/Add.2)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/45/515/Add.2, which contains a letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly by the Secretary-General informing him that since the issuance of his communications dated 18 and 25 September 1990 Sierra Leone has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of that information?

It was so decided.

ADDRESS BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL OMER HASSAN AHMED AL-BASHIR, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL SALVATION REVOLUTION COMMAND COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the National Salvation Revolution Command Council of the Republic of the Sudan.

Lieutenant-General Omer Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, President of the National Salvation Revolution Command Council of the Republic of the Sudan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the National Salvation Revolution Command Council of the Republic of the Sudan, His Excellency Lieutenant-General Omer Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President AL-BASHIR (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me to begin by congratulating you most warmly on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly of the United Nations in this session. Your election reflects the confidence that the international community places in you, and is a tribute to your country, Malta. We are very confident that under your wise guidance the General Assembly in its current session will achieve positive results aimed at the reinforcement of international co-operation and understanding among peoples. We wish you all the best in your endeavours.

Allow me also to express the deep gratitude of the delegation of Sudan to your predecessor, His Excellency General Joseph Garba, a dedicated son of Africa, who has shown considerable wisdom and skill in his stewardship of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

We should also like to renew our thanks and appreciation to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his incessant efforts aimed at strengthening international peace and security, indeed, for the dignity and well-being of mankind.

It is, indeed, most gratifying for us to see an independent Namibia as a Member of the United Nations, following a hard and protracted struggle on the part of its people and a solid international backing which finally made its independence possible. We have no doubt that young Namibia will contribute actively to the work of our Organization. We also welcome the Principality of Liechtenstein, the latest Member of the United Nations.

We also wish to express a very special welcome to our brethren in Yemen on the occasion of Yemen's unity into one strong sovereign State. We trust that this great achievement by our brothers will reflect positively in all endeavours of the international community and organizations.

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Within the same framework, we should like to welcome the forthcoming unification of Germany.

My country has recently witnessed a series of festivities on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Revolution for National Salvation, a revolution which, since its inception, has shown unwavering determination to offer the people of Sudan an opportunity to rise above all their sectarian and tribal differences, which were exacerbated by the previous régime. The people of Sudan are now free to choose the political system which best suits them without any pressure or diktat.

The Revolution for National Salvation has been logical in that it made peace its first priority. Peace is the necessary prelude to the improvement of Sudan's conditions and preparing it to play its natural role on the regional and international levels.

Having decided not to address any issue without the full participation of the people of the country, the Revolution has convened a Conference of National Dialogue on the issues of peace in the country. All national forces participated in that Conference, and were able to make recommendations on the ways and means of consolidating the country's unity, power sharing, the distribution of wealth and the relationship between religion and the State within the framework of a federal system wherein citizenship will be the basis of belonging to a unified Sudan.

The State has adopted the recommendations of the Conference, in which the peoples of both the north and the south participated, and, without any amendment, formulated upon that basis a programme for negotiations. Not surprisingly, the rebel movement accepted the programme as a workable basis for negotiation in the meeting that took place in Nairobi in December 1989 between representatives of the Government and the rebel movement. Several National Dialogue Conferences followed

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one another on such issues as the economy, diplomacy, information, social development, women and the problems of education, including the issue of illiteracy. Other conferences addressed the problems of the most vulnerable groups of the population, including the problems of displaced persons, refugees, childhood and motherhood. A wider political conference is now addressing the issue of democracy. The aim is to come up with a democratic formula of full popular participation that would enable the people to exercise democratic rule without tutelage. The Revolution has taken it upon itself to ensure the human, political, social and economic rights of the people in line with the dictates of all religions and the norms embodied in the international covenants on human rights and democracy.

All this has been taking place within the framework of Sudan's culture and heritage. Our civilization has led us towards an openness to the cultures and identities of others in order to forge a common human civilization. Recognizing that human dignity cannot be realized without securing all the requirements of such dignity, the Revolution has become aware that economics is the central factor among those components. Therefore, we have made the restructuring of the national economy a first priority, the objective being to secure and liberalize all sectors of the economy with full popular participation. Development of human resources has also become the basis for comprehensive development.

Towards that end, the Revolution has adopted a three-year programme of economic salvation. It has also promulgated a new law on investment. A number of Arab and foreign development partners have been invited to participate in reviewing the draft of that law before its promulgation, to ensure a feeling of security for their investments on their part.

Sudan's keenness to promote peace is not limited to its national borders. The yearning for peace has been extended to embrace relations with all our neighbours,

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particularly in the Horn of Africa. This we have done in the context of a just, humane perspective, which respects good neighbourliness, and which is based on a strong foundation of durable peace, in order to allow the peoples of this region to unify their wills and endeavours to develop their region. This would only be achieved by exploring the root causes of conflicts in the region in a collective manner in order to formulate feasible solutions. I am, therefore, pleased to say that Sudan has received a very positive response from all the leaders of the sub-region. We have also been encouraged by those friends who are keen to achieve peace and security in the sub-region. I am confident that the member countries of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) will pursue their collective efforts to achieve peace and development for all their peoples.

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There is no doubt that the acceleration of economic co-operation between the countries of the region, with the support of our friends, will have a positive impact on the prospects of durable peace in the region.

The successive indicators of international détente, especially over the past two years, have given rise to real hope and created opportunities in all the areas of international development, especially in the developing countries and more particularly in the least developed countries. This will naturally narrow the present gap between the North and the South. An outstanding landmark in that direction has been the quest for the reduction of arms and armaments expenditures. The Middle East witnessed an easing of tension when the guns of Iraq-Iran were silenced and successful negotiations were initiated by our brethren in Iraq to reach a final solution to that war in order to eliminate all its after-effects in accordance with international legality and respect for the Charter, as well as the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. By doing this, Iraq served the cause of peace. However, there is now cause for concern. War threatens once again and the presence of foreign fleets in the Gulf is a grave development that warrants such concern, both on our part and on the part of all those who are interested in peace and who foresee the devastating consequences that may arise from shifting the conflict from the search for peaceful solutions in an Arab framework to a confrontation whose consequences cannot be predicted.

Sudan's position on this grave situation is the following:

First, efforts must be pursued towards the achievement of a peaceful solution to the present conflict between Iraq and Kuwait within an Arab Muslim framework that would lead to the elimination of the root causes of their differences.

Secondly, Sudan is fully committed to the principles of international law and legality, the Charter of the United Nations and the charters of the League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Sudan has clearly and

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emphatically reiterated this commitment at every Arab meeting that has been held on the Iraq-Kuwait crisis. Sudan's main concern is to avert a devastating war in the region and to spare the Kuwaiti people further suffering and enable them to resume their natural place in both Arab and international communities. On more than one occasion, we have affirmed our commitment to the Security Council resolutions on this crisis. I now reaffirm that commitment.

Thirdly, Sudan wishes to express its deep regret that this should have happened between two Arab sister States. We also realize that this complex situation has developed into an imminent threat to Arab national security. This threat, as we have often said, is the intensive foreign military presence in the region, that is a prelude to the imposition of a new security order. That new security order will not take into account the requirements of national Arab security. It will be aimed at safeguarding the interests of foreign States in the region without any regard for the security of the countries of the region. It will impose upon the region a pattern of peace that cannot be compatible with the aspirations of the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State in their homeland, Palestine.

Fourthly, in the light of the preceding three points, Sudan has taken initiatives, including visits by the Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation to several Arab States with the object of closing ranks and the determination to contain the crisis within an Arab framework and prevent the penetration of foreign forces into our region. We wish to reaffirm our strong desire to achieve peace and security for our brethren, the people of Kuwait. Furthermore, we are completely convinced that an approach of military confrontation will not solve the problem. We are equally convinced that it runs counter to all

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international norms and humanitarian principles to impose a complete blockade against Iraq, and thus deprive Iraqis of food and medicine.

Fifthly, we continue to believe that this is an Arab problem and that as such it should be contained within an Arab framework. The possibilities of an Arab solution are still available despite the difficulties created by an imposed foreign intervention in the region.

From this rostrum we call for giving that Arab solution a further chance to achieve a durable settlement that could be made possible through peaceful negotiation and would thus avert the threat of war in the region and spare humanity the consequences of a devastating military confrontation.

We should all strive with a unified will to achieve lasting peace in the Gulf region. We should also silence the drums of war which some are so intent on beating.

We continue to believe that responsibility for resolving this crisis is, of necessity, collective. No single State or group of States has the right to take it upon itself to implement Security Council resolutions with its arsenals and infantry, marine and air forces, without such forces being part of a peace-keeping force established by the Security Council pursuant to Articles 41, 42 and 43 of Chapter VII of the Charter. Any action outside those articles would amount to an extremely dangerous precedent.

We appreciate the concern shown by international economic and financial organizations and a number of States with regard to the negative economic impact of the Gulf crisis especially on the non-oil producing States, and the least developed countries. We also appreciate the readiness shown by those States and organizations to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis brought about by the rise in oil prices and the resultant increase in the prices of manufactured goods

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and production inputs, which adversely affect the life and development processes of a great number of nations at a time when they need to accelerate their development efforts.

We look forward to seeing this objective point of view translated into a programme of action and into inflows of resources to the developing nations. We also hope that it will be included in the resolutions that will be adopted at this session of the General Assembly.

The international community is still confronted with a number of issues of great importance. We should face up to them with practical measures and a strong united political will. The explosive situation in the Middle East continues to be neglected and marginalized. Some States have made their first concern the defence of Israel. Some permanent members of the Security Council use their right of veto in a way incompatible with the principles of international law and the provisions of our Charter.

Four consecutive sessions of the General Assembly have passed while the Palestinian intifidah has been escalating, and every day the Palestinian people heroically prove their firm steadfastness and determination to regain their full and inalienable rights. Adherence to international instruments on human rights and the rights of nations requires the international community to respect that struggle against occupation, injustice and oppression that trample all international and human norms.

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This regrettable situation makes it imperative for the international community, represented in this Assembly, to take a clear position against the increasing waves of Jewish migrants from the Soviet Union and other countries and their settlement in the occupied Arab territories. We affirm our support for the idea of placing the occupied Arab territories under direct international trusteeship to safeguard the existence of the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territories, to preserve their integrity, safeguard their inalienable rights and protect them from oppressive Israeli practices, which have gone far beyond all reasonable limits.

The people of Sudan, along with all the other peoples of the African continent, follow with keen interest the first victories of the people of South Africa. We welcome the release from prison of the great freedom fighter Nelson Mandela and others. We also welcome the unbanning of anti-apartheid organizations including the African National Congress of South Africa and the Pan Africanist congress of Azania. On the question of political and economic sanctions, Sudan calls on the international community to keep the sanctions in place against the racist régime until such time as apartheid has been completely dismantled and a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa has emerged.

One of the most important pending problems before the international community concerns the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. My delegation regrets that the international community has failed thus far to adopt measures that would strengthen the security of non-nuclear States or guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used against them by those who do possess such weapons.

Conventional weapons continue to develop both in the terms of quantity and of destructiveness. They still find their way to the markets of some developing countries. We have not yet succeeded in realizing the clear relationship between disarmament and development.

(President Al-Bashir)

It seems to us that the role of the United Nations is being marginalized in the field of disarmament. Multilateral negotiations have not been accorded the importance they merit.

On the economic level, we have not yet succeeded in implementing the major programme of action for the 1980s in favour of the least developed countries. International co-operation for the eradication of poverty in the developing countries continues to be an unattained dream. The influx of refugees continues to grow into the host countries including Sudan. We cannot ignore the heavy burden imposed on our country by that influx of refugees, who are pouring across our eastern and western borders. The spectre of drought and the continued conflicts in neighbouring countries will generate new waves of refugees. We, therefore, call on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities in support of Sudan in this important human domain in the light of the fact that the Sudanese people are offering all they can without asking for gratitude. The fact is that the Sudan shoulders some 70 per cent of the cost of sheltering refugees in spite all its difficult economic and social circumstances.

The international community is still unable to combat the growing scourge of narcotic drugs in many communities throughout the world, while most developing countries continue to quake at the dangers posed by poverty, hunger and disease.

Problems arising from the deterioration of the environment continue to be a source of serious concern. This should lead to greater international co-operation on reaching new goals commensurate with the gravity of the dangers arising from that deterioration.

We have repeatedly affirmed that the development of the developing countries is first and foremost the responsibility of those countries. We have held to that commitment, but we continue to believe that international support is necessary in the process of development and of raising the standard of living in those countries.

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We in Sudan have accepted that the responsibility for alleviating the suffering of our people is ours and have considered every possible option to deal with the economic crisis we face. This has resulted in the formulation of a three-year programme for economic salvation aimed at restructuring the Sudanese economy through the revitalization of all economic sectors, the rationalization of the use of disposable resources, the achievement of social balance and the alleviation of the suffering of the poorer segments of the population. We can achieve those objectives by: more emphasis on development in the agricultural sector with a view to the achievement of self-sufficiency in food and in agro-industry in general, the encouragement of an export drive through a liberalization process, the elimination of bureaucratic impediments, and the mobilization of all available domestic and foreign resources to increase production and improve efficiency.

All this can be achieved only if we eliminate obstacles to investment and encourage the private sector to make a positive contribution to national development. Nor can such efforts bear fruit without a favourable international economic environment in which the international community accepts its responsibility vis-à-vis the elimination of all the difficulties which stand in the way of growth and development in the developing countries.

The debt problem remains an ongoing concern of both debtors and creditors. Debtors are over burdened by a debt service problem which hampers their development and leads to complete and utter poverty. Creditors, on the other hand, are no longer able to recover their loans.

In our country, the debt burden has reached the point where it threatens the entire structure of our econmomy. We have adopted various measures aimed at mitigating the chronic deficit in our balance of payments. Among those measures is the limiting of our imports to the extent necessary for development, the

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encouragement of exports in order to increase our export earnings and the reduction of public expenditures even though such cuts will have adverse effects which our people will have to suffer. However, those measures are not sufficient by themselves and cannot lead to an overall solution to the crisis. We hope the international community will face up to its responsibilities and increase its participation in the efforts aimed at resolving this problem, and thus match the earnestness of our policies and the firmness of the measures we have taken despite their heavy burden they will impose on our people. The problem is too serious to be left solely to the international financial institutions. In saying this, I am voicing a joint African position on the problem of indebtedness, a problem which has clearly become a grave crisis that threatens the prospects of development and the very life of the developing nations.

(President Al-Bashir)

We appreciate the encouraging initiatives of some donor countries towards reduction of the debt burden. We hope that this spirit will inspire the whole international community to follow their example, so that we can put an end to this problem which is a great obstacle to economic and social growth in our countries.

An effective solution for such a severe problem requires a positive response and genuine action to encourage a sufficient flow of resources and expertise to the developing countries, in order to expand their absorptive capacities and accelerate their development. Resolving the problem further requires that action be taken to improve the terms of trade in the international arena and open additional outlets for the exports of developing countries by removing restrictions on their foreign trade.

All of the foregoing is required to adjust the balance of power and terms of trade in favour of the developing countries and also to bridge the current development gap between the North and the South. There is no need for me to elaborate on the expected positive results from all these factors, that is, the achievement of balance in international development and the ensuing international stability and security.

The effects of all those problems I have just referred to will reflect harshly and bitterly on children, particularly in developing countries. In relation to the questin of indebtedness, for example, some children will pay the price of never seeing the light of life, others will suffer from poverty and preventable diseases because their poor families cannot afford vaccines and medication. At this crucial time, it is a sign of hope and optimism that the World Summit for Children has been convened here at the United Nations. This summit meeting indicates that the international community, represented by the political leaders of all countries, is still capable of making a humanitarian gesture in the interest of a new and

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prosperous future for children. The Summit's declaration, plan of action and political commitment represent a historic humanitarian leap that can be put to effect only by the will and determination of the international community collectively and every country individually to implement those two important international instruments. I should like to declare Sudan's firm commitment to strive, on its own and in co-operation with others, to put children first in every case.

Sudan, while it continues to face severe economic and social problems, like many other developing countries, also suffered a number of natural and environmental disasters over the past few years. It still feels the effects of those calamities.

Natural disasters and the war waged by the rebel movement in the southern part of my country have taken their toll on our food supplies, which depend to a great extent on uncontrollable climatic conditions. In the two preceding agricultural seasons, the rainfall was below the normal average. At present, signs of drought which are beginning to appear in the northern part of our country, threaten to create food shortages and therefore increase our apprehension. The situation in the neighbouring countries is no better and, therefore, we fear that there may be a new influx of refugees into Sudan in the near future. It is also possible that some of our food may find its way into neighbouring countries. Mindful of all this, we expeditiously requested the expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in order to determine scientifically the food position in our country for the coming year.

Sudan is proud to be the initiator of an unprecedented initiative which is indicative of its concern for all its citizens in all circumstances, be it in times of war or in times of peace. That initiative has allowed for the first time in

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recorded history the smooth flow of food and medicine to citizens in the areas of military operations through a number of safe-passage corridors, in pursuance of Sudan's desire to protect all its citizens regardless of location or attitude.

All those efforts were undertaken within the framework of Operation Life-Line Sudan, for which we extend our appreciation to the international community represented by the United Nations, its Secretary-General and his senior relief assistants and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund who was assigned the duty of supervising that successful operation, which stands as an example of the huge capabilities of international humanitarian co-operation. We laud the role of the international community, which became a partner with Sudan in that historic operation. We look forward to more positive international co-operation in support of phase 2 of Operation Life-Line Sudan, which relates to rehabilitation and construction in the light of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in that regard.

We have discussed sincerely the international and regional problems of concern to Sudan and the international community. We have also dealt with the problems, hopes and aspirations of Sudan with frankness and sincerity, so that all these issues may figure in the deliberations and resolutions of this session. We have come here to reaffirm our unwavering confidence in the United Nations and in international co-operation for the achievement of a more just and prosperous future for all.

We should like to assure all Members of the Assembly of the firm commitment of Sudan to remain a active participant in international co-operation and in the enhancement of efforts towards the achievement of world peace and human development.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the National Salvation Revolution Command Council of the Republic of the Sudan for the statement he has just made.

Lieutenant-General Omer Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, President of the National Salvation Revolution Command Council of the Republic of the Sudan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

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* The President took the Chair.

ADDRESS BY MR. ZHELYU ZHELEV, PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, His Excellency Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President ZHELEV (spoke in Bulgarian; English text furnished by the delegation): Please accept my sincere congratulations, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I wish you success and express my conviction that your able guidance will contribute significantly to the successful outcome of our work.

I should also like to thank Mr. Joseph Garba, President of the last session, for his personal contribution to its efficient and fruitful work.

I take this opportunity to extend my greetings to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, and to express our appreciation of, and high esteem for, his efforts aimed at the achievement of tangible results from United Nations activities for the enhancement of its international prestige.

On behalf of my country, I should like whole-heartedly to welcome to the family of nations the Republic of Namibia and the Principality of Liechtenstein, whose accession to membership in the United Nations is yet another step towards the consolidation of our Organization's universal character.

(President Zhelev)

It is both an honour and a pleasure for me to address this forum as the freely elected President of new and democratic Bulgaria, an honour because this event, at this historic moment, marks the return, well overdue, of a small and long-suffering nation to the community of free nations and sovereign democracies.

The current forty-fifth session is taking place in conditions of radical change in the world. We are witnessing a transition towards a new state of international relations. Rivalry and confrontation are giving way to dialogue and co-operation, to mutual understanding and reasonable compromise. There have been numerous manifestations of this trend lately. Noteworthy among them is the growing frequency of the summit meetings between the United States and the Soviet Union, the recent declarations of the countries of the Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the constructive spirit of the all-European process in all its dimensions and the positive results of the efforts to resolve regional conflicts.

What 1990 will be remembered for are the democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe: this has indeed been the year of Eastern Europe. Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia abandoned their Communist system and entered on the road of democracy. My own country, too, has a place in this process. Albeit slower than others, Bulgaria is also undergoing deep democratic changes which irreversibly break it away from communism.

There does however appear to exist a prejudiced view that changes in Bulgaria are sporadic or at least not as thorough as in some other States. I should, therefore, like to outline to this prestigious international forum my nation's struggle for freedom and democracy.

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The fight against the Communist system started during the régime of Todor Zhivkov. Two years before the dictator's fall from power there emerged independent associations championing human rights, ecological issues, associations of intellectuals and so forth. The régime's attempts to quell or discredit them proved futile. These independent associations were the first forms of organized opposition against the totalitarian Communist system.

Todor Zhivkov's fall from power on 10 November 1989 brought about the start of a new stage in the development of the democratic opposition in Bulgaria and of the democratic process in general. The Union of Democratic Forces, which now unites 15 political parties and organizations, was established only a month later. I should like to emphasize, though, that many former members of the Communist Party have also joined the Union of Democratic Forces. The establishment of the Union of Democratic Forces uniting the main opposition parties and organizations has turned the opposition into a major political force which the ruling party had to reckon with. The scores of mass anti-Communist rallies organized by the Union of Democratic Forces in towns and villages during the winter and spring of 1990 broke the ice of fear. The people raised their voice demanding, "Down with communism". After taking over the country's streets and squares, the opposition forced the Communist Parliament to revoke article 1 of the Constitution which had guaranteed the Communist Party's leading role.

As a result of the popular pressure, the opposition forced the authorities to agree to hold the round-table negotiations on some of the most important aspects of the country's political system. These negotiations went on for nearly three months. They were broadcast live on radio and television and ultimately served as a true political school for the nation. Ordinary people, particularly those living

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outside the capital, saw for the first time that there was nothing dangerous in criticizing and condemning the Communist Party deified by the totalitarian régime. They saw that those responsible for the crisis could be brought to justice and that the Party could be urged to step down.

The successful development of the democratic process caused a deep crisis in the Bulgarian Communist Party. Within it emerged forces aware of the need for internal reform. That Party changed its name from Communist to Socialist and took some steps to democratize its structures. I should note, however, that the course of the democratization in Bulgaria will continue to depend upon the complicated and contradictory processes currently under way in the Bulgarian Socialist Party. There can be no doubt that parliamentary democracy in the country will be strengthened if that Party manages to transform into a modern leftist Western style party.

At the round-table negotiations, the opposition forced the holding of elections for a Grand National Assembly, a constituent parliament called upon to adopt a democratic constitution and to pass legislation guaranteeing the success of the reforms in the political and economic spheres.

Last June, the opposition carried 37 per cent of the vote at the first multi-party elections in Bulgaria in the last 50 years. Together with the Bulgarian Agrarian Party, a smaller opposition organization, it now controls 40 per cent of the seats in Parliament.

Many believe that the distribution of seats in the National Assembly does not reflect the actual balance of the political forces in the country. The fact that the young people, the intellectuals and the people in the big cities, including the capital, voted for the opposition indicates that it is backed by the most active part of the population.

(President Zhelev)

A Provisional Municipal Councils Act has been passed recently aimed at dismantling the totalitarian structures at the level of municipalities and guaranteeing the participation of all political forces in local self-government. Thus, the forthcoming local government elections will be held under equal conditions for all participants.

Currently a bill is being debated on the depolitization of the army, police, security agencies, the courts of law, the state prosecutor's offices and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Under the provisions of the bill, people employed by those institutions would not be allowed membership in political parties and would be prohibited from organizing political activity in favour of any party. This law would be of extreme importance for the complete dismantling of the Communist totalitarian system since it would destroy its back one, which is the merger of the Communist Party apparatus with that of the State.

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The Bulgarian Parliament is also expected to pass a privatization act; a land law that would return to its owners the land forcibly taken from them during the Stalinist collectivization drive; laws on property, banking and trade; and numerous other laws, more limited in scope, that should provide the legal basis for our society's transition from a centralized, State-run economy to a genuine market economy.

The first, and immediate, step on the road to economic reform will be the dismantling of the State monopoly in all spheres of economic life, without which privatization and agrarian reform would be quite impossible. The guarantees for the implementation of this far-reaching programme are: first, the awakening of a nation that desires to live in the conditions of democracy and of a market economy that releases people's energy and individual initiative; and secondly, the will and energy of the democratic opposition in Parliament, which is fuelling the democratic process and is putting forward initiatives to prevent this process from being halted.

In this brief sketch of my country, I must again emphasize that Bulgaria now has a multiparty system; a democratically elected Parliament; an opposition that controls 40 per cent of parliamentary seats and has won the political initiative; free press, radio and television; and political pluralism in the spiritual sphere. In other words, we have an awakening civil society that is eagerly moving towards democracy.

This gives me sufficient grounds for concluding that Bulgaria is no longer a Communist or totalitarian State. But neither is it a fully democratic country, inasmuch as it still has not adopted a new Constitution and has not been able to base its economy on free-market principles. Bulgaria is currently in a state of

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transition from totalitarian rule to democracy - that peculiar transitional state that some refer to as post-totalitarian. The processes, however, are irreversible, and the building of a fully democratic State, with a democratic Constitution, democratic institutions and a market economy, is only a matter of time.

The deep democratic changes that have taken place in less than a year - changes that I mentioned earlier - could not fail to leave their imprint on Bulgaria's foreign policy, could not but lead to changes in its principles, aims and priorities.

We have categorically rejected the doctrine of limited sovereignty, known as the Brezhnev doctrine, since it infringes our national independence and violates the Bulgarian's national dignity and national pride. We have also discarded the so-called principle of socialist internationalism, which is nothing but an ill-concealed means of subjugating our foreign policy to that of other States. We have abandoned the principle by which the country's entire foreign policy was designed to serve the interests and ideology of a single party enjoying a monopoly of power.

In place of the principles that have been rejected, we have adopted new ones that meet the interests of a democratic State. Thus Bulgaria has restored the principle of full national independence and unrestricted sovereignty, which enables us to direct our own foreign policy. The interests of the State and the nation as a whole have taken the place of the principle of one-party domination. No party can now place its own interests above those of the nation.

The principle of realism and pragmatism has become an important one in our new foreign policy. Pragmatism, naturally, does not imply egotism with respect to other States, nor does it imply gaining advantage for one's own nation at the

(President Zhelev)

expense of others. On the contrary, we are well aware that political pragmatism is feasible only in strict compliance with established international norms, only if the interests of other countries and peoples, no matter how close or remote they may be, are respected and protected.

That is why Bulgaria has so firmly supported the resolutions of the Security Council in connection with Iraq's aggression against Kuwait and is strictly observing the embargo imposed against the aggressor. Bulgaria is probably the European country hardest hit by the Gulf crisis. The blow is made even more painful, having occurred at a time when the country is undergoing far-reaching economic reforms. Production is dropping, and there is an acute shortage of goods, raw materials and energy. These factors are accelerating inflationary processes and increasing unemployment.

Regardless of the wants and hardships that the Bulgarian people are forced to bear, we shall continue to condemn the Iraqi aggression. We shall continue to demand the return of Kuwait's legitimate Government and shall continue strictly to observe the embargo. We are doing this in accordance with our own convictions, not because we are forced to. I believe that Bulgaria's reaction to the Persian Gulf crisis has demonstrated in practical terms my country's return to the international community as a civilized member.

The unanimity with which the United Nations condemnded the aggression against a small and defenceless nation is truly moving. It is indeed encouraging to see countries such as the United States, the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and others, joining together against the aggressor. In the conduct of the world Organization with respect to this crisis we see the archetype of future global guarantees for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all small

(President Zhelev)

States, as well as the return of the United Nations to its main objectives and its fundamental role.

However, so long as all this is still in the future - while it has yet to become reality - my country is compelled to seek guarantees for its national independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. This problem is assuming particular importance now, at a time when the old system of military alliances and imperial relations is disintegrating and a new system has not yet been built. At present the guarantees for Bulgaria's territorial integrity stem from the Warsaw Treaty and our bilateral agreement with the Soviet Union. But things are changing fast.

Given that all political realities are in a process of rapid change, our only reliable security for the future lies in faithful adherence to the principles of our foreign policy, whose new priorities stem directly from those principles.

First among these priorities is the desire to maintain good - if possible, friendly - relations with our neighbours, relations based on mutual respect for each other's interests, recognition of the territorial integrity of all countries in the region, and the promotion of economic and cultural ties with each of those countries on the basis of mutual advantage.

I should like to emphasize in particular my country's readiness to contribute to the improvement of the situation in the Balkans. We are firmly committed to putting an end to the crisis in Bulgarian-Turkish relations. I am convinced that the time has come to terminate this last cold war in Europe. At the same time, I should like to underline that our willingness to reach mutual understanding with Turkey does not mean that we have any intention of abandoning the increasing

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closeness developing between us and other Balkan neighbours. In other words, let us Europeanize the Balkans, rather than Balkanizing Europe.

A second priority in Bulgaria's foreign policy is its opening-up to the world by eliminating all economic and political barriers inherited from the old régime. Without this opening-up we should be unable to obtain the new and modern technologies and the investment that are needed from the successful transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy.

A priority for Bulgaria is membership of the united Europe of the future and the comprehensive development of our relations with the United States and all other industrialized nations. This means broad participation by my country in the global integration processes. In this respect we are intensifying our ties with all international organizations and are taking an ever-more-active part in their work.

(President Zhelev)

Thirdly, we are trying to be more active and flexible within the framework of the Helsinki process with a view to its institutionalization as an international mechanism for consultation and co-operation.

A fourth priority is the reassessment of our country's performance at the United Nations, an organization that we will continue to support. It is our view that the Organization can further enhance its role in our world both in protecting the national interests of its Member States and in safeguarding world peace in general.

As a fifth priority, I should like to point out the adaptation of our national legislation and new Constitution to the requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to mention only a few.

Bulgaria has already undertaken important steps to guarantee the rights and freedoms of all Bulgarian citizens regardless of their religious and ethnic affiliation, to bring our legislation into line with international standards in this sphere in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Significant amendments have been made to the Foreign Travel Passports Act, the Law on Bulgarian Citizenship and the Law on Foreign Nationals' Stay in the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

As of tomorrow, Germany will again be a united State. From this important rostrum and on behalf of the Bulgarian nation I extend our warmest and sincere congratulations to the German nation, with which we have maintained close ties throughout our history. I am convinced that a united, democratic and prospering Germany will promote stability and international co-operation in Europe and the world.

(President Zhelev)

Finally, I wish once again to reiterate what I believe the world should know about Bulgaria: my country has embarked irreversibly upon the road to modern democracy and a market-oriented economy. I express the hope of all Bulgarians that the new Bulgaria will earn its place in the community of nations united by the values of freedom, democracy and peace.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the People's Republic of Bulgaria for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. AL-SHARA' (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, particularly as your country, Malta, and mine, Syria, enjoy age-old cultural and historical ties, for both countries belong to the Mediterranean area.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the achievement of your predecessor, Mr. Joseph Garba, in successfully guiding the work of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. May we wish his friendly country, Nigeria, progress and prosperity.

We warmly welcome the independence of Namibia and its joining of the international community. Namibia now stands with the peoples of the world in support of their just causes. We also welcome the membership of Liechtenstein in our international Organization.

It also gives me great pleasure to express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, our appreciation of the valuable efforts he continues

(Mr. Al-Shara', Syrian Arab Republic)

to make towards the establishment of peace and stability in the world and the consolidation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Over the last few years and in the course of this year in particular, the world has witnessed major, swift and profound events and transformations whose effects are not limited to the current phase of international relations but will have an impact on the future of humanity as a whole.

We may agree or disagree in assessing the consequences of those current events and transformations particularly in the long term. However, it is now certain that the cold war is over and that a number of countries which until recently used to be classified as of the "Socialist bloc" have opted for a new approach. In a few hours' time, a united Germany will emerge. As recently as last year, any talk of a united Germany was taboo. In brief, we could say that the world order brought about by the Second World War has now collapsed and a new world order is beginning to emerge with the disappearance of the cold war, the fading of the spirit of animosity between East and West and the launching of a new phase of understanding and co-operation.

(Mr. Al-Shara', Syrian Arab Republic)

With the end of the cold war and the collapse of the old world order, it was only natural that a spirit of optimism should prevail, especially that the great majority of developing countries had been unable to participate in that collapsed old order, because at that time they were either under colonial rule or under the protection of a colonial Power. None the less, the developing countries of the South still face difficult tasks if they are to play their natural role in shaping the new world order and, thereby, become more capable of protecting their independence and achieving prosperity for their peoples free from all forms of dependency and hegemony.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was the first serious test of the ability of the new world order to survive. That is why the Security Council did not have many alternatives; hence, its prompt and strong reaction to the invasion, not only to save Kuwait as an independent State Member of the United Nations, but, first and foremost, to save the policy of international détente and the new world order from collapse. That explains the totally unprecedented international consensus, in condemning aggression and calling for the unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restitution of Kuwait's legitimate Government.

Apart from its belief in those concepts and its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the Security Council resolutions, Syria, as an Arab country, is duty-bound under the Charter of the Arab League and the Joint Arab Defence Pact to help any Arab country which falls victim to aggression. Furthermore, in accordance with the principles it has always followed in its Arab policy, Syria considers the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait to have caused grave damage to the people of Iraq itself, because it has put them in a dead end - to say the least. The invasion has harmed the Arab nation as a whole, for it has aggravated the weakness

(Mr. Al-Shara', Syrian Arab Republic)

of that nation, divided its ranks and undermined its prestige. It has also harmed the Palestinian cause, since the concern of most Arab and other friendly countries about that cause has diminished.

The invasion of Kuwait, with all its attendant horror and the fear it instilled in the heart of every Arab citizen in the Gulf, has provided the reason which made the presence of foreign troops necessary as a means of protecting Arabs from fellow Arabs, something that could not have never been imagined.

It is evident that ending the foreign presence in the region - which Syria seeks - could be accomplished through serious efforts to bring about the unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restitution of Kuwait's legitimate Government.

Hiding behind slogans about Islam, Pan-Arabism and the distribution of oil wealth will neither deceive the people of Iraq, nor reduce the magnitude of their sufferings. Arabs and Muslims know full well that Islamic Iran was attacked in the name of Pan-Arabism and that Arab Kuwait was attached and occupied under the slogan of Islam and Jihad. Although Iraq is one of the richest oil States, the entire Arab wealth will not be sufficient to meet the cost of its irresponsible policies.

The policy of aggression and occupation and the annexation of the lands of others by force has always been rejected and denounced by the international community. United Nations resolutions condemning the Israeli occupation of Arab lands and calling for Israel's full withdrawal from those lands are reiterated every year in this international forum and others. Yet the cold war and the rivalry between East and West tended to enfeeble the effectiveness of United Nations resolutions and in one way or another allowed the aggressor to maintain its occupation and reap the fruits of its aggression.

(Mr. Al-Shara', Syrian Arab Republic)

But now that the cold war between East and West has ended and relations between them have witnessed a transition from rivalry and confrontation to co-operation and partnership, and with the emergence on the horizon of a new world order, which the world community is anxious to tend and nourish, all occupation, annexation and the acquisition of the lands of others by force must come to an end; the aggressor should no longer reap the fruits of its aggression.

It is truly a strange paradox that Israel, which claims to desire peace, should reject a conference for peace in the Middle East. The international community has been calling for such a conference, under United Nations auspices, for the last decade. It is yet another strange paradox that Israel, which claims that the problem in the region is the non-existence of peace accords between itself and Arab countries, does not acknowledge that the real problem lies in its occupation of Arab lands, Peace cannot be achieved without Israel's full withdrawal from those lands. Peace and occupation have never coexisted under the same roof at any time in history.

Syria, which has not hesitated to condemn the occupation and annexation of an Arab country by another, expects the world, in the new international climate, to stand firm against the Israeli occupation of Arab lands. We believe that the statement issued by the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the Security Council on 28 September 1990, which calls for finding a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), is an important step in the right direction. The rejection of occupation and annexation is a principle that must be respected and applied in all cases, irrespective of who the occupier might be or where the occupied territories might lie, for such a principle must be at the core of the new world order.

(Mr. Al-Shara', Syrian Arab Republic)

Now that the Taif Agreement - which has Arab and international support - has become a national charter and a new constitution for Lebanon, the Lebanese crisis has come closer than ever before to a final solution.

(Mr. Al-Shara', Syrian Arab Republic)

On the face of its belief in the unity of Lebanon and the necessity of safeguarding its security, stability and independence, Syria is committed to supporting Lebanese legitimacy and to helping it implement the measures necessary to extend the authority of the Lebanese State over its entire territory. This requires the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) which demands the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Lebanese territory.

Syria, which enjoys ties of historic friendship with Cyprus, supports the United Nations efforts to settle the current dispute in the island, on the basis of United Nations resolutions in order to safeguard the unity of the country, its non-alignment and the interests of all its citizens.

As for the situation in Afghanistan, we deem it necessary to ensure full commitment to the implementation of the Geneva Accords and to reaffirm the sovereignty of Afghanistan, its independence, its non-alignment and the right of the Afghani people to choose their own Government without outside interference.

As for the situation in Korea, Syria welcomes the current negotiations between the two Koreas and supports the efforts being made for their unification and for their joining the United Nations.

The progress that has been achieved in Africa in the area of independence and liberation will remain incomplete unless the apartheid régime is eradicated in South Africa. We reaffirm that it is necessary to implement the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted by the General Assembly at its sixteenth special session.

Syria once again welcomes the release of the African leader, Mr. Nelson Mandela, and salutes his honourable stance in defence of the rights of his people and his unwavering resistance to the apartheid régime.

(Mr. Al-Shara', Syrian Arab Republic)

The peoples of the world who long for a more just, secure and prosperous future look to the world Organization with great hopes - hopes for solutions to chronic problems that can be resolved only through international efforts and solidarity. In the context of this new world order the United Nations will assume - indeed it already has begun to assume - an important role and position that has never been witnessed since its inception. This is a new chapter in the history of our world Organization. Let us declare our solidarity and political will; let us write a new chapter of the best that mankind longs for everywhere.

Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta): It is indeed an honour for me personally and on behalf of the Maltese delegation to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. For Malta and its people it is a matter of great pride and satisfaction to see one of its eminent personalities occupy the highest seat of our Organization and preside over its deliberations at this critical juncture when we are witnessing the evolution of a new world order.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to your distinguished predecessor, Major-General Joseph N. Garba, for the excellent manner in which he guided the work of the forty-fourth session of this Assembly.

Malta also wishes to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General for his unstinting efforts in guiding this world body through the many difficult tasks assigned to him by our Organization. We owe him our deep appreciation and assure him of Malta's full-co-operation and support in his endeavours.

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

My Government extends warm congratulations to the Principality of Liechtenstein, a small and friendly European country like Malta, on its admission as a sovereign and equal Member of the United Nations.

We are on the eve of witnessing another momentous event in world history. Tomorrow, the process of change in Europe will further be accomplished by the German unification. Malta joins other delegations in congratulating the people and Government of Germany on this historic occasion.

When we look at the political changes taking place not only in Europe but also in other parts of the world, we are encouraged that the future of our children can be built on strong foundations of security and co-operation. In this respect the United Nations role is paramount in reshaping the destinies of our countries and peoples.

The end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s have recorded an upheaval in international politics ushering in a search for accommodation, conciliation and co-operation, a relaxation of global tensions and genuine efforts for the resolution of global and regional questions. The global community is moving forward towards a situation which truly upholds the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. Malta is more than proud to be a party to this collective effort. The reaction to the current crisis in the Gulf is proof of the determination and ability of this Organization to face up to new challenges and to forge ahead in maintaining peace and security.

Last year, the Prime Minister of Malta began his address to the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly by remarking that perhaps for the first time it could reasonably be done with a heart-felt smile of contentment at the progress achieved over the past year, rather than with clenched teeth in response to mounting international tensions.

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

This year, however, while it would be unwarrantedly too pessimistic to say all spiritual good humour had been wiped out and twisted into a grimace of dismay, any smile we can manage to muster can only be at best ambivalent and suffused with an overlay of anguish.

The present moment is one of paradox. We must still rejoice that perhaps the most painful thorn which for many years had lain in the flesh of this Assembly and in many ways had handicapped its functioning with full effectiveness as a means of global growth, is in the final stages of being removed. The unified approach of the Security Council on the Gulf crisis has given an unprecedented dimension to world security and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The overwhelming condemnation of the invasion and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq reflects the political willingness of nations small and large, poor and rich, to stand firm and united in the face of threats to international peace and security.

But this moment of fulfilment is also a moment of anquish. The threat of a terrible war hangs ominously in front of us. The Government of Malta is fully aware of the sufferings and deprivations which the situation in the Gulf is bringing on those concerned. The economic sanctions on Iraq impose sacrifices also upon those that apply them. Yet the suppression of acts of aggression by collective action is an indication of the seriousness with which we all - as Members of the United Nations - should react in order to stop such acts of aggression from being perpetrated by one country against another. We have to ensure that in this world the might of right will prevail over the right of might.

Unfortunately, the mental and material energies which we would have liked to see increasingly focused and concentrated on how best to ensure the positive restructuring of eroded antagonistic edifices and on the creative projection of new collaborative networks for global co-operation have once again had to be largely directed to crisis intervention.

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

There is, however, a hopeful remark that should perhaps be made in this connection. Contemporary science has taught us that pressures applied to a weak system will distort and may destroy it, but that the same pressures applied to a stronger system may, instead of disrupting it, stimulate it to reorganize itself better.

Indeed, in these last few months we have seen a consolidation of important concepts that are shaking off mistrust, confrontation and disagreements. Confidence, co-operation and understanding have given impetus to negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament measures. The Negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), as well as the negotiations in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) concerning confidence- and security-building measures in Europe, are contributing to a new world order in which not only participating States but the community of nations at large will benefit. Malta is taking an active part in the CSCE negotiations and making its modest contribution to the commitments of the Helsinki Final Act.

The trail-blazing agreement reached earlier this year between the United States and the Soviet Union on the destruction and non-production of chemical weapons has added momentum to the multilateral negotiations being undertaken in the Conference on Disarmament on a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. Malta urges all those countries involved in the negotiations to recognize the urgency of this objective and to accelerate the tempo of the negotiations.

As reflected in the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, the United Nations has shown vitality and consistency on other questions as well. Namibia's smooth transition to independence under the watchful guidance of the United Nations is one of the foremost achievements of the

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

international community. Malta is ready to assist the Namibian people in their nation building, as it did before Namibia attained independence.

In southern Africa the United Nations has been instrumental in condemning apartheid and in exerting pressure resulting in the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela, a symbol of courage and hope for the people of South Africa.

The successful conclusion this year of the elections held in Nicaragua under the supervision of a United Nations Observer Mission, as well as the role played by the United Nations Observer Group in Central America, have set in motion a new peace-keeping and peace-making role for the United Nations.

The progress made with regard to the settlement of the Cambodian problem is also a credit to our Organization. Through the efforts of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council a framework has been defined for a comprehensive political settlement of that problem. Malta supports the efforts towards that end.

The positive trend of the United Nations involvement in reconciliation and peaceful solutions to problems can be measured by the various ongoing initiatives being undertaken, including the new round of talks on Western Sahara, the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1990) and the growing commitment to an early political solution of the Afghan question.

We are pleased to note the constructive dialogue evolving between the two Koreas on the process of reunification in the Korean peninsula, which must be the ultimate objective. In the interim period Malta would support the Republic of Korea in seeking United Nations membership, as it would also support the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should it wish to do likewise.

The progress on those issues has made our system stronger and should therefore stimulate our Organization to resolve the outstanding issues that still elude

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

a long-lasting solution. I am referring specifically to three questions that directly and indirectly affect the Mediterranean and Middle East regions, namely, the questions of Palestine, Cyprus and Lebanon.

The Assembly will agree that the time is more than ripe to find a solution to the question of Palestine, which has been on the agenda of the Organization for the past 45 years. The international community should feel very concerned that no significant progress has been made on this question, which has been recognized as the core of the Middle East conflict, with all its manifold and complex ramifications. The convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East has been called for with overwhelming support by the General Assembly at previous sessions. That call should not remain unheeded. In Malta's view it remains the best vehicle for enabling Palestinians and Israelis to coexist in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.

We are perturbed to note that no progress has been made on the Cyprus question within the framework of the intercommunal talks. At the same time we note the resolve of the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus and the fact that they remain committed to the objective of finding a solution to that question.

The turbulent situation in Lebanon is yet another issue that constitutes a preoccupation for the international community and that all of us have a responsibility to resolve.

The community of nations represented in the Assembly has shown a new strength in its determination to resist the pressures that attempt to push it in the direction of international anarchy and chaotic violence. But beyond that, there should not be a mere restoration of the status quo ante. Time is irreversible, and there is no mere going-back in history. If nothing else, the present crisis will have driven home the importance of the very topics that some Member States,

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

including Malta, have been pressing upon the attention of the Assembly, even though they may have seemed to be too future-oriented, especially given the harassing nature of existing circumstances.

The present crisis has shown in the clearest way that the gravest threat to peace and security is no longer rooted in East-West tensions but in the complex of socio-economic and environmental issues on which the future conditions of life on the planet depend: the sources of energy, the mechanisms for its commercialization, global systems of communication, demography and so on.

In his statement last year the Prime Minister chose to concentrate on two related points of general interest. The first was the common management of extraterritorial spaces, the resources of which could be of significant and even crucial importance both to the future of mankind and to the Organization's role in fashioning it. The second was the development of new systems of governance that would take into account the great changes that have occurred in the world in the 45 years that have elapsed since the United Nations system was first set up in the wake of the Second World War.

Notable among those changes was the decline in the effective competence of nation-States, the basic units of the United Nations system, linked to the rise in influence of a varied cast of non-governmental and private sectors on the international scene. Recognition of such changes and their reflection in systems of governance were particularly relevant to the setting up of appropriate international structures for the management of shared resources for the common good of mankind. However, and more generally, that is also highly advisable in relation to the whole complex of socio-economic and environmental issues that forms the context in which the most acute of the world's present troubles have arisen and are arising.

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

Today it is perhaps easier to see that, while the Assembly cannot elude the task of reacting to the immediate problems of international peace, especially the maintenance of the security of Member States, it would be equally wrong to lose sight or track of prospects likely to bear fruit in a slightly broader perspective. Ad hoc reactions to crises have to be fitted into a more pro-active approach to global security, a concept that has now to be used in a sense broad enough to include environmental and economic survival. For that reason, the topics raised by the Prime Minister in his statement last year have, if anything, become even more relevant.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992, in which so many high expectations have been placed, offers an opportunity for the international community to address the global ecological challenges that confront mankind.

Any effective, collective action in the major areas that the Conference is expected to tackle - whether climate change or biodiversity and genetic heritage - entails envisaging new methods of funding, such as the introduction of some form of international taxation.

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

In this light, the common management of shared resources, including those in extra-territorial spaces, and the destination of relevant benefits take on particular interest. So also do the proposals to ensure effective forums for continuing dialogue on a realistic basis and for circumventing the breakdowns which have occurred in so many key sectors vital to the development of a new world order - political, social, economic and environmental.

Let me conclude by quoting from the statement made by Mr. Spaak of Belgium, the President of the first session of the General Assembly, in 1946. His wise advice as to the functions of a good representative to the Assembly are most relevant, particularly at this time when we are pinning all our hopes on the collective system embodied in the Charter of the United Nations:

> "Each of us must first of all make an effort to sink our preferences, to put aside our particular sympathies and our particular antipathies. Naturally, we must all watch over the interests of our respective countries, but we shall not succeed unless we are convinced that those interests must take their place in the wider setting of the general interest, and unless we are conscious, over and above the interests of our own country, of the interests of the world and of mankind." (Official Records, General Assembly, First part of the first session, Plenary Meeting, 2nd meeting, p. 48)

Prince SAUD AL-FAISAL (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. President, it is my honour to convey to you and to this august assembly the greetings of the guardian of the two holy sites, who had wished to be with you and to speak to you in person. However, the conditions prevailing in the region have required that he remain in the Kingdom. He has entrusted me with the task of conveying to you the position of our Kingdom on the most important event in our region and the world at large.

(Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia)

Mr. President, it is my pleasure to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of this forty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. It is a tribute to you personally and to your country and its important regional and international role. I am fully confident that your presidency of this session will be an effective factor in achieving the objectives to which the international community aspires in these difficult international circumstances.

I avail myself of this opportunity to extend thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Joseph Garba, the President of the forty-fourth General Assembly of the United Nations. He conducted its deliberations, as well as the deliberations of the special sessions during the past year with efficiency, wisdom and effectiveness, for which he deserves praise and appreciation.

It also gives me pleasure to express thanks and appreciation to His Excellency, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his persistent and distinguished efforts in the service of the cause of international peace and security, and his endeavours to develop the role and effectiveness of the United Nations for the realization of the high objectives for which it was established.

It is also my pleasure to welcome Liechtenstein to the membership of this international organization, coupled with our hope that its entry will consolidate the effectiveness and universality of joint international action, and our wishes to its friendly people for prosperity and progress.

We stand here today on the threshold of an overwhelming danger with a situation that teeters between the drums of war and the bells of peace. Coming to you from the heart of the Arab land, the cradle of Islam, the seat of the two holy mosques and the abode of the messenger of God, I cannot but set out by saying

(Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia)

"peace be upon you." That is the call for peace and friendship exchanged by every Arab and every Muslim when they meet.

We would have wished for the continuation of the march of peace that accompanied the previous session of the General Assembly. Since we met here last year, there have been glimpses of hope and the emergence of the beginnings of a new international order, whose mainstay is co-operation between countries, and understanding between peoples. The intifadah of the steadfast Palestinian people in the occupied territories was illuminating the road towards the hoped for solution. It captivated the hearts of peoples and touched their conscience. The Iraq-Iran war came to an end, and we had begun to look forward to a new era of peace and concord in the region of the Gulf. Namibia won its independence, and the march towards the elimination of apartheid in South Africa began. International conflicts began to move towards resolution. We carried the banner of establishing co-operation in the region, a region vibrant with suffering and hope, so that States should enjoy stability and so that peoples should live in prosperity. However, catastrophe took us by surprise. Events took place that were thought to be impossible in the past.

As we stand with you today in this international forum, grief overcomes us for what the State of Kuwait, a dear and neighbourly sister State, is being subjected to.

We listened, as did you, here, a few days ago, to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, the Emir of the State of Kuwait, who conveyed to us in his historic statement a vivid and comprehensive picture of the catastrophe which befell brotherly Kuwait. The eloquent words of His Highness have stirred everybody's conscience. In this esteemed international gathering, they have evoked feelings of participation, firm solidarity and effective support.

(Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia)

When the sudden aggression of the Iraqi régime dispersed the people of Kuwait, violated the country, pillaged its assets and went far beyond all the limits of trust; when it invaded and occupied the brotherly neighbour, Kuwait, and amassed forces on the borders of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Iraq deviated from the Arab order based on the charter of the League of Arab States and deviated from the world order by violating the Charter of the United Nations.

All peoples and Governments of the world have rejected the aggression. It has been condemned by the League of Arab States, deplored by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and reproached by the Non-Aligned Movement. As for the Security Council, it has monitored the invasion and occupation, rejected it in all its aspects from the very first day and adopted the necessary resolutions to oppose this invasion and erase its effects.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has taken a firm stand in rejecting this aggression, with all its consequences and effects. The rulers of Iraq bear the responsibility of its results and consequences. Today, Saudi Arabia declares from this rostrum of international legitimacy that it stands with the whole world in opposition to the continued occupation. From this rostrum we extend a salute of admiration and esteem to the people of brotherly Kuwait, and from this rostrum we declare our firm rejection of the occupation by any State of the lands of another State by force of arms. We declare our firm insistence on the immediate unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from the territory of Kuwait, the restitution of Kuwait's legitimate Government and the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from the borders of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

We had spared no effort in trying to contain the dispute that transpired between the two neighbouring sister States, Kuwait and Iraq. The Kingdom hosted a number of eminent officials from the two countries at the Jeddah meeting. Our

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objective, arising from the national responsibility of the Kingdom and the dictates of its Islamic religion and lofty Arab ideals, was to arrive at a solution in a brotherly fashion and on the basis of an understanding that would have prevented events from deteriorating.

Regrettably, the Kingdom was taken by surprise by the Iraqi régime's invasion of Kuwait and the flagrant aggression against its sovereignty, its people and its possessions. We were taken by surprise, again most regrettably, by the build-up which the Iraqi régime has brought in proximity to the Kingdom's international borders.

The Kingdom has risen above the wounds and the "injustice of kinsmen" and preferred patience in the hope that the Iraqi leadership would reconsider and withdraw. But the Iraqi leadership followed up by declaring the annexation of Kuwait to Iraq and amassed its armed forces in offensive formations along our country's borders, thus again violating conventions and laws after it had violated traditions and revoked promises, exposing the Kingdom's security to extreme danger and threatening international peace and security.

We Arabs, we in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, do not break faith nor do we accept threats. Thus our leadership has taken firm decisions that will ensure the protection of both land and men, the protection of vital economic assets and the consolidation of defensive capabilities.

The Kingdom was particular, at the most critical and threatening time, to initiate its steps on the basis of a genuine commitment to conventions and treaties; for Saudi Arabia, which participated in the founding of the United Nations, could find no alternative for self-defence but to rely on Article 51 of the Charter. The Kingdom, which participated in the building up of the League of Arab States, could find no alternative in opposing the threatening invader but to

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rely on the treaty of mutual Arab defence. And as a founding member of the Arab Gulf States Co-operation Council, it could not find any alternative in facing up to the absorption of a sister Gulf State but to rely on the Gulf Co-operation Council's charter. The Kingdom, a founding State and the host of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, could find no alternative but to rely on the charter of that Organization. Our leadership has carried out its responsibilities and accounted for the anticipated development of events so that the Kuwait catastrophe could not recur and so that it will not be taken by surprise at the hands of adventurism.

Arab, Islamic and other friendly States hurried to the support of Saudi Arabia's armed forces in performing the duty of defending the State and the safety of its citizens.

We have given assurances that the presence of sisterly and friendly forces on Saudi territory is a temporary one. It was in response to our request. We have given assurances and were assured that this is a measure for defence only. It was necessitated by circumstances that were concocted by the ruling régime in Iraq and will come to an end with the reversal of the circumstances that made it necessary. In spite of this, we were very patient.

In its persistent Arab desire for peace, the Kingdom participated with the Arab family in the search for an Arab solution. It responded to the invitation of President Mohammad Husni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to attend the emergency Arab summit conference - which was held in Cairo on 19 Muharram, 1411 A.H., corresponding to 9 August 1990 - which resulted in the desired Arab resolution.

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But the Government of Iraq did not respond. Instead, it displayed an arrogant behaviour towards Arab and international legality by insisting on not reversing its annexation and occupation.

We Arabs, we in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, wonder: how can an Arab solution be reached on the ruins of another Arab State? How can a solution be reached when the Government of Iraq has blocked every avenue that may lead to it? How can we join in the international march towards new international co-operation if we forgive the usurpation by one Arab State of another Arab land? To us, the acceptable solution is the one based on Arab legitimacy and on the charter of the League of Arab States. It is the solution that arises from official institutions represented by the Arab summit conference and the Ministerial Conference of the League of Arab States.

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We Arabs are a people who value friendship and commitment. God has honoured us by bringing us the message of Islam. With mingled humility and pride, we have raised the banner of justice, helping the oppressed and rescuing the anxious. We have always risen above the violation of our neighbours' rights, upheld the sanctity of our brethren and felt that pillaging for spoils is beneath our dignity. Those are our genuine Arab morals and the magnanimous Islamic principles that are our code of behaviour as Arabs and Saudi Arabians. It is neither acceptable nor reasonable to apply to our behaviour or actions as Arabs norms and standards that are lower than those of other nations. God has endowed our Arab nation with the message, thus making it the best nation raised up among mankind. Our nation prescribes what is righteous and forbids what is evil. God has honoured it with Islam and thus it carried the torch of civilization and knowledge to all the other nations and spread the principles of mercy, sympathy, solidarity, justice and fairness among peoples. Hence, the Arab nation must set an example by adhering to the civilized moral behaviour which stems from its high ideals and lofty principles.

It is an honour to me to extend the profound thanks and appreciation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to our brethren in the Arab States, our brethren in the Islamic countries and to those friendly States in the five continents - exceeding 26 in number - which have come to the support of the Saudi Arabian armed forces. The Kingdom's dependence is on God Almighty above all else. Almighty God is He who protects us and our people from all harm. We rely on the faithfulness and dutifulness of our people, and then on the brethren and friends who have hastened to protect peace in the land of amity and peace.

We sought to build the strength of Iraq. We are intent on sustaining and preserving that strength. However, we want a strong Iraq that protects the Arab

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countries, an Iraq that would be the mainstay of Arab national security, not an Iraq that threatens the security of Arab countries and strives to undermine the foundations of Arab order.

An Iraq that commits aggression against a neighbouring sister country, violates its sanctity, squanders its potential and threatens the entire Arab order cannot be counted as a force for the Arabs. Rather, it is actually a source of discord and division in the Arab ranks. It weakens and enfeebles the Arab body.

We cannot allow the Iraqi régime's adventure to veil the glow of the principal Arab cause: the Palestinian cause. It pains us that attention is being diverted from the intifadah of the heroic Palestinian people, that the search for a just solution to the Palestinian cause should retrogress and that the dangers posed by Jewish immigration to the occupied territories should cause no outcry or protest. It pains us even more that the Iraqi régime, which claims a monopoly over the salvation of Palestine should follow Israel's example of occupying the land, dispersing its people and refusing to withdraw. It has even given Israel an international pretext to consecrate occupation, empty the homeland of its people and replace them with immigrants. It is for the sake of Palestine that Iraq should withdraw from Kuwait; it is for the sake of Palestine that it should abide by the dictates of international legitimacy so that we may move international legality to achieve for the people of Palestine what, God willing, will be achieved for the people of Kuwait.

Irrespective of the circumstances, we welcomed the settlement finally reached in the situation between Iraq and Iran following a decade of war. We ask that it be followed by a similar step with respect to Kuwait. He who hastens to make peace with an adversary will suffer no embarrassment if he rushes to be responsive to a brother.

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The serious damage inflicted by the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait has economic, social and human dimensions whose effects are not confined to the Middle East region. Those effects have repercussions for most of the countries of the world.

The international community's solid stand on the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and the firm solidarity demonstrated by the countries of the world in facing up to that aggression with all its results and effects must be accompanied also by effective co-operation with the States which have suffered as a result of the aggression, due to their staunch unflinching adherence to the Security Council resolutions, especially to those relating to economic sanctions and the embargo against Iraq.

Within the framework of that co-operation and in the spirit of international responsibility, Saudi Arabia, in co-operation with its partners in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has adopted an oil-production policy that will compensate as much as possible for the interruption of Iraqi and Kuwaiti exports and will make the greatest possible effort to maintain stable and reasonable prices.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has given urgent financial and development assistance to many of the countries that have suffered due to Iraq's aggression. In addition to the support announced at the United Nations for Turkey, Egypt and Jordan, we look forward to the extension of that support to include Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Somalia, Djibouti and many other countries proven to have suffered.

Countries which have stood up honourably and steadfastly to the Iraqi aggression, participated actively in implementing economic sanctions and, as a result, have borne financial, economic and social burdens deserve the appreciation and care of the entire world community. Thus, Saudi Arabia expresses its

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satisfaction at the steps taken by the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at their joint meeting held last week in Washington to establish a co-ordinating group to assist the affected countries. We have expressed our readiness to participate actively in that direction.

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We would have liked to be able to deal in detail with the other critical issues which we have participated in addressing over the past few years, namely, the continuous search for opportunities for peace in the Middle East, the international support for the heroes of the intifadah in the occupied territories, the Taif Agreement, the hopes of Arabs for Lebanon, the hopes for a peaceful solution for Afghanistan, and many other common aspirations. However, the preoccupation of the international community with the Gulf crisis is almost monopolizing the efforts of the Security Council and the General Assembly to avoid a catastrophe. We all know how the crisis started and we all hope that it will end on the basis of international legitimacy.

The international position is crystal clear. There is no ambiguity or vagueness about it. The successive Security Council resolutions have articulated that position, and it was confirmed again a few days ago by the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the Security Council in their joint statement following their meeting with the United Nations Secretary-General.

Therefore, there is no need for vacillation between word and deed or contradictions between declaration and implementation. There is no place for alternative proposals or for the circulating of initiatives which achieve nothing but a waste of time. The soundness of any position cannot be judged by the condemnation of the invasion alone but also on the basis of the proper choice of solution. Any solution cannot be complete except by preventing the aggressor from reaping the fruits of his aggression. When the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia declares its firm commitment to Security Council resolutions, it believes in the steadfastness of the international will: the cohesion of the international stand will force the rulers of Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait and lead to the restitution of the legitimate Government of Kuwait.

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Forty-five years ago, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia participated in the founding of an international order which emerged from the shattered ruins of the Second World War. It participated in founding this Organization, the United Nations, which emerged after the collapse of the League of Nations due to the lack of the international will to stand up to the usurpation of one of its Member States.

If the situation in our region today causes concern, we look to the future with determination and hope. The Kingdom undertakes to participate effectively in the vistas that will open up towards a new international order.

At this critical phase through which our Arab world is passing, we must learn the lesson from what has happened in order for us to avoid the possibility of its taking place again; otherwise tragedies will recur in a region full of probabilities. The wheel of time must continue to turn, the caravan must continue to march, and the march must proceed.

In looking to the future, we turn first and foremost to our brethren in the occupied Arab territories and to the dispersed Palestinian people who are scattered all over the world; and we say to them: "Your cause is our cause. Let us rise in our hearts and by our deeds above the Arab disputes and divisions, for they are the focal place and the axis of gravitation." We say to them: "Stand as a solid barrier against those who attempt to exploit your feelings or to feed on your wrath in order to harm the Arab body, your body." We say to them, "Support legitimacy, for it is the support of your cause, the cause of all Arabs, and the base which guarantees your legitimate rights in liberating the land and establishing the State." We say to them today, more so than at any other time, "Let us preserve firm solidarity."

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We in the Arab world, in Saudi Arabia, say that our commitment towards the people of Palestine was not born today, nor was it born yesterday. It was born with the first heartbeat of the cause. Our solidarity with the Palestinian people will continue today and tomorrow and until victory is achieved, for Jerusalem is the first of our two Kiblahs, and the Al-Aqsa mosque is the third after the two holy mosques.

We regard the aspirations of our Arab nation after a better future as the first priority. We realize that this nation must invest all its material and human resources in the march towards development, prosperity and progress, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will spare no effort in working towards the achievement of that objective. In the area of development, we did not fail to co-operate with our brethren in the Arab world nor did we fall short of fulfilling our obligations towards them. We have participated in the efforts for comprehensive Arab development even when our material resources were limited. Before the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war we had more available resources that would have enabled us to offer a larger volume of development assistance. However, that long war consumed them. Despite the decline in the revenues that that war caused, it is the right of the Arab citizen to wonder today over the causes of the diminished Arab development efforts in realizing his aspirations and ambitions. Maybe we have a lesson to derive from the experience of Eastern European countries which have proved that the malaise lies in the sterility of the structure of economic policies rather than in the lack of resources, despite their significance. The solution should come through developing those structures and improving those policies while providing the necessary resources.

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In the face of this reality, we are required today to put the Arab house in order and organize our relations on the regional and universal Arab levels. We must search for appropriate solutions to deal with the imbalance that has afflicted the Arab order, so that it can regain its health and required balance.

Perhaps the foremost issue we should review is the method of economic co-operation between the Arab States. Although it is not our habit to boast about our assistance to our brethren, the lesson we have derived from what has happened is that co-operation should be through Arab institutions which operate in a secure, scientific manner which the Arab citizen can perceive and judge.

We are part of this world in which we live. Therefore, the resources with which God has endowed the Arab world are not for our benefit alone, but should benefit the whole world at large.

(Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia)

While we, as Arabs, acknowledge the need for the world's co-operation, we believe that the rest of the world realizes that it is necessary to co-operate with us.

In the final analysis, our Arab world cannot remain alone outside the orbit of the accelerating new trends which are altering the balance of relations between States, nations and peoples.

We are part of this world - a world which is today turning away from polarization, tension and division. We are with this world in its new endeavour to overcome crises, to overcome unresolved problems and to build a new world of co-operation, understanding, freedom and peace.

In this we begin with ourselves. We bear our responsibilities towards our region and this new world. It is a duty in which both responsible leaders and responsible citizens participate. And while rulers handle the functions of State and the citizen faces the problems of daily life, all of us must build the contours of our future path.

We have always called for a unified Arab strategy which plans for a common future and which avoids volatile emotional reactions. From a position of responsibility, we call on the opinion makers, we call on Arab intellectuals to participate in this endeavour, for they have to bear their responsibilities in supporting the new Arab order as the opportunity for education opens up in the Arab nation - every Arab citizen and every responsible citizen. Every official has a duty and every intellectual has a place. We all have one objective which is a decent life for the Arab individual. The individual is the real asset, the individual is the pulse of the nation for the future.

(Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia)

In this very Hall, the Kingdom of Saud Arabia participated, with the distinguished gathering of Heads of Member States, in the international declaration on children's rights. We were elated by the children as they stood with us, with their innocence and enthusiasm, the children who themselves declared the children's charter, the dream of today and the hope for tomorrow.

As we enter a new decade with the world - a new decade that leads us to a new century, the twenty-first century, we share in confronting the concerns of today, and we look forward to participating in making the dreams of tomorrow come true. We endeavour in our region to ensure that the revitalized Arab order should be in step with the new world order. We endeavour in our region to ensure that the gateways of the new order - the new world - should be open to the aspirations of States and the hopes of peoples - a new world of co-operation, understanding and justice. This new world, which resolutely and persistently affirms the enduring rights of nations to independence on their soil, and which rejects the logic of force, annexation and occupation is a world that believes in tolerance and dialogue between nations and rejects the logic of apartheid and the methods of oppression and expulsion. This new world in the service of which the means of learning and the discoveries of modern science abound, must ensure the social and economic justice which would make possible the realization of progress and prosperity for nations and ensure security and stability for the world.

In all this, we are inspired by the Charter which we signed and to which we have been committed from the very outset.

Today we continue to be faithful to that Charter. We are with the Charter of the United Nations, with the Charter of the League of Arab States, with the Charter of the Arab Gulf Co-operation Council, with the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic and we are with the Charter of the Non-Aligned Movement.

(Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia)

We, the Arabs, we in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are with the world.

We, Mr. President, are with you.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.